



RIDGEFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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*Susie Da Silva, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools*

April 9, 2021

Dear Faculty and Families,

Happy Spring Break! It's hard to believe it is that time of the year. We are looking forward to welcoming back our entire district on April 19. To do this, we ask our students and families to remain committed to the mitigating measures that we have found to be effective. Whether you are traveling or having your own staycation in CT- please be reminded that we all have a role in opening our schools, and keeping them open for all students. If you travel, we strongly recommend a COVID-19 test prior to returning to school. More details can be found below.

This week we hosted a podcast (linked below) to discuss our plans to open in full. We are hopeful the podcast answers any remaining questions from families or students.

Wishing you a safe and relaxing vacation- well deserved.

Warmly,

Susie

Susie Da Silva, Ed.D.

A Few Bits

Important Board of Education Budget News

The Board of Finance voted to reduce the Board of Education 2021-22 budget from 3.45% to 2.35%. This is a reduction of \$1,103,985 to the Board of Education's approved 2021-22 budget.

The next meeting to take place on the budget process will be the **Annual Town Budget Meeting** to be held on **Saturday, April 24, 2021, from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.** The meeting will be held outdoors under a large tent by the Playhouse. In-person attendance is limited. The Town will be posting the link to register on their website in the coming days.

As stated in the Town Charter, Section 10-1. Budget (c), *The annual capital and operating budgets of the Board of Education and the Board of Selectmen, as recommended by the Board of Finance, shall be brought to the Annual Town*

*Budget Meeting for discussion, then sent to referendum. (Those in attendance at) **The meeting shall have the power to decrease or delete any line item, but it may not increase or add any line item or establish any additional line item.** In addition, per the Town Charter, Section 10-1(c), the Board of Selectmen may decide to present certain or all capital items of under \$100,000 per item to the Town Meeting for a vote. (Those in attendance at) **The meeting shall have the power to delete any such capital item, but it may not increase or add to any line item or establish any additional line item.** Said vote shall be binding with reference to those items. All other items on the capital budget shall go to referendum as set forth in Section 10-1(d).*

School Status

We will send an update on the learning model on Wednesday, April 14. This will be specifically important for the secondary schools as it will identify which learning model students and families can expect on April 19.

RPS Summer Bridge Program

Save the Date

RPS Summer Bridge Program for all students Pre K to 12

*The goal of this program is to provide a BRIDGE back to the experiences and moments that our students missed this year. Therefore, we are offering an opportunity for all students to return to RPS and engage in creative, unplugged, interactive experiences with their peers in a device free setting at **no cost to families.***

Students currently in grades K-8 will have 3 Sessions:

Session 1: June 17- June 30

Session 2: July 5- July 16

Session 3: July 19- July 30

*The first session will also be open for current PreK students.

Sessions from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Current High School Students:

Choose from a variety of 3 to 5 day intensive programs that will take place between June 17 and June 30.

Course offerings include: *Cooking with Miss Kelly, Digital Art and Design, Robotics, Design Challenges, Model UN and more. We are currently working on additional opportunities for the last two weeks of July.*

Registration is tentatively set for April 26.

Health And Safety

Beginning April 19:

- We will no longer quarantine entire classrooms at the middle school level. If there is a case of COVID-19 in a classroom, only those individuals who are within six feet for 15 minutes will be placed in quarantine. This change was already implemented at RHS and has resulted in many fewer individuals being placed in quarantine for each positive case, and has not been connected with in-school COVID transmissions. **We will continue to quarantine entire classrooms at the elementary level.**
- Following CDC and CT DPH guidance, we will allow quarantines to be reduced to 7 days if exposed individuals get a negative COVID-19 test on day 5 (or later) after exposure. Day zero is the date of exposure. Day one is the date after exposure, individuals testing negative on day 5, 6 or 7 may return on day 8. Individuals should closely monitor themselves for symptoms until the 14th day.
- We will no longer quarantine every rider on a bus if another passenger is positive, we will interview students and review tapes to determine who may have been within 6 feet of a positive individual for 15 minutes and only place those individuals in quarantine. Students will continue to sit three rows back from the driver.

Fully vaccinated individuals who are two weeks post their 2nd vaccine dose (or only dose of Johnson and Johnson) are not required to quarantine if exposed to COVID-19 as long as they are symptom free.

Please continue to stay home from school if you have any symptom of COVID-19 even if you have been vaccinated.

Vaccinations

RPS sent a survey to staff this week to determine where our staff are at in the vaccination process. With 566 survey responses, 96% of RPS staff are opting to receive the vaccine. 45% of staff are already fully vaccinated and over 50% of staff are now partially vaccinated. To borrow a phrase from Dr. Fauci we have seen a concomitant diminution of COVID-19 cases at RPS with the increase in staff vaccinations. We just experienced our longest stretch (9 days) without a COVID-19

case among students or staff since October 5th. Vaccinations are safe and highly effective and we encourage you all to get yours as soon as possible.

Now that many of our High School students are beginning to be vaccinated, we remind you to please let the RHS school nurses know once your child has received their 2nd vaccine dose. Please scan a copy or take a photo of your child's vaccine card and email it to rhsnurses@ridgefieldps.net. **To schedule your vaccine click [this link](#) or call 877-918-2224.**

Travel Guidance

If you or your family are traveling outside of Connecticut over Spring Break please review the travel guidelines on page 2 of this "[Finish Strong](#)" document from the CSDE and DPH. Although it is no longer a requirement in CT, If you are traveling we will be grateful to receive a copy of your negative test results. Please forward them to your school nurse.

The CDC no longer recommends testing after domestic travel for fully vaccinated individuals. A COVID-19 test is **required** for international travel for both vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals.

Food Service

Please know there will be no afternoon meal pickup available during the school break (between 4/12 and 4/16) at East Ridge Middle School. Additional meals will be available on Friday April 9, 2021 between the hours of 3 p.m. and 4 p.m. for those who would like them. Both Scotland and Barlow Mountain Elementary weekend meal programs will be distributing meals on Friday April 9th with no distribution during the break. The Food Service crew wishes everyone a wonderful week off of school and we look forward to getting back to our normal schedule starting April 19, 2021.

Curriculum Updates

Parent Workshop: Save the date for math placement workshops. The elementary presentation will be on April 27 at 10:15 a.m. and the middle school presentation will be April 28 at 10:15 a.m.

Recommended books for 11-13 year olds by Monica Cabarcas in *School Library Journal*, March 2021 "[Reading in Between](#)"

RPS Highlights

Enjoy the RPS News [here!](#)

[Ridgefield Tiger Talk](#): April 19th is a big day for Ridgefield, we are inviting all students at all grades to come back in full! In today's show we welcome Dr. Susie Da Silva Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Elizabeth Hannaway Assistant Superintendent of Special Services, and Aaron Crook Director of Nursing Services. We talk about how we're preparing schools for full return, what is considered in the planning meetings, the influences in decision making, and looking forward to this summer and beyond. Thanks for listening!

Check out this TRIO from VPES, [here](#).

Don't forget to sign on to social media...mostly light and fun!

Twitter: @RPS_DaSilva

Instagram: rpssuper

Quote of the Week

"Fear of failure is higher when you're not working on the problem. If you are taking action, you are less worried about failure because you realize you can influence the outcome." *A retired school superintendent*